

'tout est dans Fesprit'; and on the next that, though Germanophiles turned a deaf ear to Belgian atrocities, 'pour-tant elles etaient belles'* He may theorise with such sceptical disillusion that modern critics, overjoyed as usual to drive some wedge of unreality between life and literature, can describe his work as showing 'complete indifference to moral values or human justices'. And yet so far is this from the truth that not only do we find in it a fanatical insistence on the 'devoir' of the artist, but 'bonte' is one of the words that he uses with deepest feeling: 'cette bonte, cette distinction morale que maman avait appris de ma grand'mere a tenir pour superieures a tout dans la vie'—'sans doute ce n'est pas le bon sens qui est "la chose du monde la plus repandue", c'est la bonte, Dans les coins les plus lointains, les plus perdus, on s'emerveille de la voir fleurir d'elle-meme, comme dans un vallon ecarte un coquelicot pareil a ceux du reste du monde, lui qui ne les a jamais vu, et n'a jamais connu que le vent qui fait frissonner parfois son rouge chaperon solitaire.' It was the poet in him who wrote that; not the philosopher. Proust was surely wiser than his creed. Certainly one may be allowed to wonder a little at the inconsistency which can dedicate to 'mon incomparable ami', Leon Daudet, part of a work which describes friendship itself as not merely futile, but 'funeste'.

However, the new and original part of

Proust's view of
things is not his disillusion—that is ancient
enough—nor
yet his sense of the eternal appeal of la
princesse loin-
taine' or the consoling power of beauty—
these too are
commonplaces. To say nothing of Greece, the
authoress
of *Genji* nearly a thousand years before had
little here to
learn from him: 'Hopes then the dew-drop
upon the
wind-swept grasses of the heath to build a
safe abode?'—
'What know you of sorrow, who wear not the
traveller's